NZW Policy on New Breeding Techniques in Research

The New Zealand grape and wine industry has built an international reputation for producing distinctive wines. This reputation has been built without the use of New Breeding Techniques (**NBTs**).

Our industry has a broad and deep commitment to sustainability, and NZW invests heavily in research for the benefit of the industry.

Context

NBTs, including gene editing technologies, have developed very significantly over recent years. The range of outcomes that can now be achieved using NBTs has significant potential to provide improved ways to identify and generate desirable characteristics in grapevines. Such use could, in turn, provide sustainability benefits to the New Zealand grape and wine industry such as:

- increasing our understanding of vines, grapes and wines produced from them;
- reducing the cost and increasing the speed of identifying new grape vine varieties with desirable characteristics, and of commercialising those varieties;
- reducing inputs and increasing yields by identifying vines with greater vigour, greater resistance to pests and diseases, or other environmentally beneficial characteristics;
- providing greater flexibility for responding to climate change; and
- potentially enabling faster response to biosecurity incursions.

To the extent that other wine industries have access to NBTs that are not available in New Zealand, the New Zealand industry may find itself at a competitive disadvantage.

Despite these possible benefits, the release of organisms containing genetic material modified using NBTs or their use in food may present risk. In addition, consumer understanding and acceptance of NBTs and associated risks remains poor. Any use of NBTs may place the reputation of New Zealand wine at risk.

NZW's position on NBTs

The use of NBTs and organisms containing genetic material modified using NBTs is closely regulated by the New Zealand government, and we support this regulation.

NZW does not support the release of grapes, or of wine production organisms, containing genetic material modified using NBTs into the New Zealand environment.

Notwithstanding the above, NZW recognises that NBTs may provide valuable opportunities for the industry in ways which do not result in the release of any organisms containing genetic material modified using NBTs into the environment. In particular:

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- NBTs can be used as a valuable research tool in ways that do not result in the release of any genetically modified organisms. NZW supports such use of NBTs for research purposes, in compliance with applicable regulation to ensure its safety.
- Our industry is firmly committed to the sustainable production of grapes and wine in New Zealand. NBTs may offer research opportunities to enhance sustainable production systems (for example, by enabling faster identification of characteristics of conventionally bred grape vines that are pest or disease resistant, or by enabling a faster response to biosecurity incursions that may threaten the industry).

Education

Over time, as NBTs evolve and become better understood, and the evidence base regarding release of organisms containing genetic material modified using NBTs grows in other countries, it is likely that some NBTs may gain greater acceptance.

NZW supports increased public education about NBTs, the outcomes of using NBTs, how they are similar to and different from conventional breeding technologies, and their potential uses in food production.